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Informal presentation of requests submitted under Article 5 and of the analyses of these requests

Request for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention
Executive summary

Submitted by Yemen

1. During the past 50 years, from the revolution to the period of civil confrontation in 1994, Yemen has witnessed a number of conflicts, each leaving behind a significant level of contamination by mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

2. The government of Yemen is committed to the complete elimination of landmines and ERW and established the National Mine Action Committee (NMAC) in June 1998 to formulate policy, allocate resources, and develop a national mine-action strategy. Furthermore, the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre (YEMAC) was established in January 1999 as the implementing body of the NMAC with the primary responsibility of coordinating all mine-action activities in the country. The aim of the current Strategic Mine Action Plan is to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel landmines.

3. A nationwide Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) completed in July 2000 identified 592 mine-affected villages in eighteen out of the country's twenty-one governorates. Out of those, 14 communities were classified as high impact and 578 communities were considered medium or low impact. A total of 1,078 mined areas were identified with a reported surface area of 922.7 square kilometres mainly in the central and southern regions of the country. The landmine and ERW problem has had a serious impact on access to critical resources, blocking access to grazing land, agricultural land and water sources for drinking and irrigation. It has also impeded infrastructure development and the implementation of social development projects in affected communities. The LIS recorded a total of 4,904 casualties over the past fifty years, of which 2,560 were killed and 2,344 injured. Accidents recorded between 1999 and September have claimed 243 victims of which 153 were injured and 90 killed, 87 of which were children (56 boys, 31 girls) and 157 adults (141 men and 16 women). In 2002 and 2006 a further 3 new affected communities with a population of 36,747 and seven mined areas with total size 604,400 square meters were identified through population and local authority reports.

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4. Since its establishment in 1999 the NMAC, through its implementation body YEMAC, had progressed steadily towards its original objective to address the 923 square kilometers of ERW and mine contaminated land identified by the LIS. Yemen has progressed at a quick pace after being the first nation in the region to ratify the Mine Ban Treaty on 1 September 1998 as witnessed by the developed of its indigenous capacity, moving from a DIM (then DEX) programme to a nationally executed programme as early as October 2003. Yemen's international reputation for technical competence within the wider mine action community and its significant national in-kind contributions through the provision of seconded staff from the Yemen military.

5. In Yemen's initial extension request submitted before its original deadline in extension in 2009(April 2009 to March 2015), Yemen sought to complete the technical survey of the remaining mined areas with a size of 213,228,369 square meters which remained from the LIS located in Shabwah, Al Jawf and Mareb governorates and in 12 different Districts in Taiz, Sa'ada, Ibb and Hadhramout. However, In addition to the areas identified by the LIS, conflict between the Yemeni army and Al Qaida groups in 2011 in Abyan governorate and a civil conflict in Sa'ada, Hajjah, Sana'a and Amran has called for additional survey operations given suspected contamination. Successive conflicts have presented new and unexpected challenges with a resultant new and increased demand for mine action activities in the country. Unfortunately, previously mine-free and cleared land has been either suspected or physically confirmed as being contaminated or re-contaminated. In addition a new and highly significant threat of victim operated improvised munitions (IM) and booby-traps, which were deployed throughout Sa'ada and Abyan has emerged:

- In **Sa'da**, after the insurgency war during the period 2006 to 2009, new kinds of mines made manually have been used by insurgents. This war extended to the Hajjah and Amran governorates and many mine accidents have been reported in these governorates causing an unknown number of civilians to be killed and injured. The impact survey in Sa'da initiated in October 2012 in five districts (Al Dhaher, Razih, Shada', Haidan and Saqeen). These efforts resulted in the identification of a total of 248 SHAs affected by mines measuring 126,424,000 square meters located in 142 villages (17 high impact, 73 medium impact, 52 low impact).
- In **Abyan**, the impact survey was carried out in two districts (Zunjbar and Khanfar). These efforts resulted in the identification of a total of 37 communities found to be affected by mines and ERW (3 high impact, three medium impact and 31 low impact) with a total of 62 SHAs measuring 126,805,016 square meters in the four remaining districts contamination by mines and ERW is expected.

6. Due to the high impact in Sa'ada and Abyan governorates, these governorates have been prioritized and in October 2012 YEMAC started implementing the LIS in these two governorates within 90 per cent of Yemen's capacity deployed to these governorates. Technical survey, MRE, and VA activities were initiated in December 2012. As the priority for the moment is the high impact areas in Abyan and Sa'da the remaining governorates (Sana'a, Amran, and Hajjah) have not yet been visited. A further obstacle has been the security problem in Amran and Hajjah governorates which did not offer the necessary security conditions to carry out survey and demining. Fortunately this condition has improved and work will be able to resume. With the new areas identified, the new baseline of contamination includes a total of 1,398 mined areas measuring **1,176,561,296** square meters.

7. In addition to the known contamination, we suspect to identify new contamination by anti-personnel mines in the following governates:

- In Sa'ada and Abyan: for the rest of the districts that have not been surveyed by the LIS, Yemen expects 4 districts in Sa'ada (Qataber, Ketaf, Sehar and Al Safraa) could be contaminated by mines and ERW with the SHA possibly measuring 172,593,568 square meters and also expects four districts in Abyan (Lawder, Al Wadhee', Modya, and Al Mahfad) could be contaminated by mines and ERW with the SHA possibly measuring 167,689,600 square meters.
- In Hajja: the war in Sa'ada spilled over to Hajja governorate. Non-technical survey, technical survey, clearance and other activities have not started in Hajj as of yet. According to the information received from the local authority in Hajjah, YEMAC is expecting that three of the 27 districts could be contaminated by mined and ERW in this Governorate. These suspected districts are Kushar, Mustabaa' and Bakeel Al Meer.
- In Sana'a: during the revolution events happening in 2011, and according to the media reports, YEMAC expects many areas could be contaminated by ERW and small areas could be contaminated by mines in two districts (Nehem and Arhab).
- In Amaran: the war of 2006-2009 in Sa'ada spilled over to Amran governorate to cover Harf Sofyan district. This district is the largest area located in the north of Amran and on the boarder of Sa'ada Governorate.

8. Although the provinces of Sana'a, Amaran, and Hajjah have not been surveyed it is expected that contamination by landmines and ERW is presented in these areas. In estimating possible contamination by calculating the percentage of SHA found in Sa'ada and Abyan the affected area in these provinces may equal a total of 243,364,800 square metres (Sana'a 71,400,000 square meters, Amaran 153,098,400 square meters, Hajjah 18,866,400 square meters). This is only speculation and needs to be confirmed. These expected areas could be more or less according to the LIS results which is planned to be done in 2014.

9. Since 2000 to September 2013 Yemen has carried out technical survey of its SHAs and through this process has cancelled a number of SHAs and confirmed a number of minefields. Out of the 1,398 SHAs identified measuring 1,176,561,296 square meters a total of 897 SHAs measuring 838,118,076 have been cancelled/reduced through technical survey with 501 SHAs measuring 338,443,221 square meters remaining to be technically surveyed. During the technical survey process a total of 1,015 minefields have been confirmed measuring 50,546,876 square meters with a total of 908 minefields measuring 42,403,620 square meters having been addressed and a total of 107 minefields measuring 8,143,256 square meters pending clearance. These efforts have led to the identification and destruction of 119,376 anti-personnel landmines, 775 anti-tank mines, 199,075 items of unexploded ordnance and 3,511 booby traps.

10. Clearance efforts in Yemen have been carried out through applying manual clearance and mine detection dogs and working in accordance with international standards and Yemeni standards. Yemen ensures the quality of their work by the deployment of Quality Assurance teams during technical survey and clearance operations as well as after technical survey and clearance operations have been concluded.

11. Multiple factors have impeded compliance with the Convention over the course of the initial extension period including the following: (a) limited access to Sa'ada, Hajjah, Amran, Abyan and Sana'a governorates during the period from 2009 to the beginning of 2012; (b) technical obstacles including the difficulty in identifying mines planted in mountain areas, desert and shifting sands where is very difficult to use mine detectors due to magnetic , iron soil, and depth of the mines; (g) windy season in July and August especially in desert areas, and the raining seasons in the summer that restrict the clearance operations in these areas; (h) the need to restructure the companies and platoons to small

groups (ERW teams) because most of areas are contaminated with ERW (cluster bombs and booby traps) which requires more logistical equipment for each team, and; (i) the non-availability of multi-year funding which hampers proper short-term and medium term planning and inadequate funds which cause delays in the implementation of planned activities.

12. In light of the contamination still faced by Yemen, Yemen still required approximately five year to fulfil its obligations under Article 5. During the extension period Yemen will carry out the following activities:

(a) Technical Survey (September 2013 – September 2014)

- September 2013 – February 2014: in Abyan, Al Dhale', Al Jawf, Amran, Hadhramout, Ibb, Lahij, Mareb, Sa'ada and Shabwah governorates measuring 338,443,221 square meters.
- March 2014 – June 2014: SHA Expected in Sa'ada/ in the districts left (Qataber, Ketaf, Sehar, and Al Safraa' districts) area unknown.
- March 2014 to June 2014: SHA Expected in Abyan/ in the 4 districts left (Lawder, Al Wadhee', Modya and Al Mahfad) area unknown.
- July 2014 to September 2014: SHA Expected in Hajjah/ in the 3 districts left (Bakeel Al Meer,Mustabaa' and Kusher) area unknown.
- July 2014 to September 2014: SHA Expected in Sana'a/ in two districts (Nehem and Arhab) area unknown.
- July 2014 to September 2014: SHA Expected in Amran (Harf Sofyan district) area unknown.

(b) Clearance (June 2014 – February 2020)

- June 2014 to May 2015: 1,628,651 square meters of known contamination and additional area identified through survey.
- June 2015 to May 2016: 1,628,651 square meters of known contamination and additional area identified through survey.
- June 2016 to May 2017: 1,628,651 square meters of known contamination and additional area identified through survey.
- June 2017 to May 2018: 1,628,651 square meters of known contamination and additional area identified through survey.
- June 2018 to May 2019: 1,628,651 square meters of known contamination and additional area identified through survey.
- June 2019 to February 2020: Any remaining areas.

13. Yemen will carry out this work with its current capacity of 6 clearance companies, one clearance platoon, eight explosive ordnance disposal tams, 5 mine awareness teams, three victim assistance teams, 27 medical support teams, three mine detection dog groups, 12 technical survey teams and 2 quality assurance teams. Additionally, Yemen seeks to increase its capacity by carrying out the following:

- By the end of 2013, fifty new deminers will be seconded to YEMAC from the ministry of defence;
- YEMAC is planning to upgrade the old demining equipment (mine detectors, protection equipment, vehicles etc..) and to buy new demining equipment for its staff;

- YEMAC is planning to update the demining standards (NMAS) to fit updated international standards, and;
- YEMAC is contracting the GICHD to upgrade IMSMA to the new version 6.7.

14. The activities to be carried out over the three five year extension period will cost a total of US$ 65,827,756 with US$ 15,353,056 to be provided by the Government of Yemen and US$ 50,474,700 to be mobilized from donor countries.

15. As mentioned above, in addition to the known mined areas, Yemen expects to also have confirmed mined areas to be cleared in the areas remaining to be surveyed. However Yemen is confident that it will also be in a condition to clear minefields identified over the course of surveys during the extension period. Therefore, Yemen will appreciate the acceptance of this request and accordingly to approve an extension of five years from March 2015 to March 2020. It is clear that much of this is based on speculation of what will be identified during the Non-technical and technical survey operations and Yemen commits itself to offer yearly updates on progress made on survey and the results of this survey.